

DESMARAIS ROMPS TO VICTORY AS DOLLARD STICKS WITH TRADITION

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It became clear very quickly after the ballot boxes for Dollard riding were opened last night that Louis Desmarais had maintained Liberal tradition and swamped the local opposition.

He arrived at his committee rooms in a St. Laurent shopping centre at about 9: 10 p.m. and attributed his win to “a marvelous organization” in the West Island

¹ Harvey Shepherd, “Desmarais Romps to Victory as Dollard Sticks with Tradition,” *The Montreal Gazette*, 23 May 1979, 10. [Edited by Christopher Richard Wade Dettling, 2016]

riding. But he admitted he was “a little worried” about the prospects for a minority government.

Richard Holden, the defeated Progressive Conservative, was undaunted as he recalled that the Liberals had posted a majority of about 29, 000 votes in the riding in the 1974 federal general election.

“With a Clark government,” Holden said, “there are a lot of Liberals in Quebec who don’t like to sit in opposition.”

“I think there’ll be lots of opportunities for bye-elections—and I’ll be in one of them,” he promised.

The colorful Holden was facing long odds in his attempt to take the riding for the Tories. *Supply and Services* Minister Jean-Pierre Goyer won it easily for the Liberals in 1974 for the fourth time, swamping the Conservative, Lynda Moffet, by 37, 200 votes to 9, 962.

Goyer, who had represented the ethnically diverse riding on northwest-central Montreal Island since 1965, resigned from the cabinet last November and from the *House of Commons* in January, when he joined a Montreal law firm.

Holden did have a few things upon which to pin his hopes of closing the yawning gap between the Liberal and Tory votes in the riding, which approximately includes the municipalities of St. Laurent, Dollard-des-Ormeaux and Roxboro and part of Pierrefonds.

Redistribution since 1974 had removed from the riding a part of the largely French-speaking Liberal stronghold in the Cartierville area. At the same time, it added some English-speaking suburban areas farther west, where the Tory message might have had more appeal.

Moreover, while Desmarais was a candidate with prestige, he had some drawbacks. He was reported to have given serious consideration to running as a Conservative in the Westmount riding. And his being parachuted into the riding irritated some of the local partisans of Yolande Taylor, a professor of hospital administration at the *University of Montreal* and president of the Liberal Riding Association since 1972, who had also sought the nomination.

HARVEY SHEPHERD, 1979

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